

SNF Project achieves four million safe hours

Michele Gerber, *Fluor Hanford*

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project employees set a new project record on Feb. 6 by reaching four million safe work hours without a day lost to injury. Bob Heck, Fluor Hanford vice president for the SNF Project, called the achievement “superb...demonstrating truly outstanding dedication to safety day after day after day, while performing unique and difficult work.”

The milestone was reached by nearly 700 employees of prime contractor Fluor Hanford and its subcontractors on the project. It represents approximately 22 months of sustained safe work.

The new SNF Project record comes after a previous record of three million safe hours achieved last June and two previous one-million-hour achievements during the period between April 1999 and April 2000. Additionally, this past year the SNF Project recordable injury case rate was lower than the Hanford Site average.

The four-million-hour safety feat occurred during a time of significant accomplishments that included removing 44 Multi-Canister Overpacks loaded with spent fuel from the K West Basin, drying the fuel inside the MCOs at the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility and placing the fuel in dry, interim storage at the Canister Storage Building. Each MCO contains nearly 5 metric tons of irradiated uranium and approximately 150,000 curies of radioactivity. Thus far, the project has removed and dried about 12 percent of the spent nuclear fuel that was stored in the K Basins when the effort began.

The SNF Project is also installing a canister cleaning system in the K West Basin, designing and building a Fuel Transfer System (including an annex building and a transfer corridor) at the K East Basin, preparing to install a sludge/water filtration system in K East and setting records for quick processing at the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility and the Canister Storage Building. All project employees participated in the safe work record.

“This achievement is one of many indicators that the SNF team is dedicated to doing work safely,” said Ron Ruth, SNF safety manager for Fluor Hanford. “The SNF Project is meeting an aggressive schedule and handling very challenging, highly radioactive materials. The employees are a team — they are very serious about attaining a safe and injury-free workplace.”

“This achievement belongs to the SNF Project workers,” Heck added. “I have tremendous admiration and respect for them, and I congratulate them. They have proved they are completely capable of meeting our high expectations for production and safety.”

Hanford’s spent nuclear fuel is being moved away from the Columbia River shoreline as part of the Department of Energy goal to consolidate wastes and special nuclear materials in the center of the Hanford Site. ■



02020069-015df

Employees in the Canister Storage Building, shown with the giant Multi-Canister Overpack Handling Machine, or MHM, are among Spent Nuclear Fuel Project workers who helped achieve a four-million-hour safety record.